

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2030

I.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : PINT, IS

SUBJECT : ISRAEL FACES NEW CABINET CRISIS

REF: TEL AVIV 1983

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

SUMMARY: LESS THAN A MONTH AFTER FORMATION OF NEW CABINET, PUBLICATION OF AGRANAT COMMISSION'S INTERIM REPORT HAS PRECIPITATED INTENSE POLITICAL STORM, PUTTING SURVIVAL OF GOVERNMENT IN DOUBT. MRS. MEIR HOLDS KEY IN SHOWDOWN BETWEEN BROAD ANTI-DAYAN PHALANX WITHIN RULING LABOR-MAPAM ALIGNMENT CALLING FOR HIS RESIGNATION AND DAYAN'S RAFI FACTION DEMANDING THAT ENTIRE GOVERNMENT EITHER STAND OR FALL TOGETHER. AT SAME TIME LIKUD OPPOSITION AND SMALL LEFTIST PARTIES CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR GOVERNMENT'S RESIGNATION. IF MRS MEIR FAILS TO FIND SOME COMPROMISE SOLUTION IN NEXT FEW DAYS, SHE MAY HAVE NO CHOICE OTHER THAN TO RESIGN AND CALL NEW ELECTION. FROM PRESENT INDICATIONS SHE APPEARS UNWILLING TO SACRIFICE DAYAN ALONE AND, IN ANY CASE, WITHOUT SUPPORT OF DAYAN'S RAFI FACTION THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LOSE ITS PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. DECISIONS OF NEXT SEVERAL DAYS WILL BE DECISIVE NOT ONLY FOR POLITICAL FUTURE OF

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MRS MEIR AND DAYAN BUT COULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON ISRAELI

APPROACH TO ARAB-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. ON EVE OF PASSOVER HOLIDAY, ISRAEL IS ONCE AGAIN PLUNGED INTO A POLITICAL CRISIS IN WAKE OF DISSATISFACTION OVER FAILURE OF AGRANAT COMMISSION INTERIM REPORT TO ADDRESS ITSELF TO ISSUE OF MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY. ANIT-DAYAN FORCES WITHIN RULING LABOR ALIGNMENT ARE CALLING FOR HIS RESIGNATION. OPPOSITION LIKUD, PLUS SMALL LEFTIST PARTIES, CONTINUE TO CALL FOR RESIGNATION OF ENTIRE CABINET AND NEW ELECTION. DECISIONS TAKEN WITHIN LABOR PARTY AND BY CABINET IN NEXT FEW DAYS WILL BE DECISIVE IN DETERMINING WHETHER GOVERNMENT, FORMED LESS THAN A MONTH AGO, WILL SURVIVE.

2. CURRENT CRISIS BRINGS TO A HEAD EFFORTS SINCE OCTOBER WAR BY ANTI-DAYAN FORCES WITHIN AND OUTSIDE LABOR PARTY TO FORCE DAYAN TO RESIGN.

AS WE HAVE NOTED PREVIOUSLY, RE-FORMATION OF TRIPARTITE COALITION UNDER LEADERSHIP OF MRS MEIR WITH DAYAN CONTINUING AS DEFENSE MINISTER HAD ONLY POSTPONED SHOWDOWN. CONTROVERSY OVER FINDINGS OF AGRANAT

COMMISSION IS ESSENTIALLY AN EXTENSION OF THIS PROCESS, WITH VIRTUALLY SAME FORCES LINED UP AGAINST EACH OTHER.

3. IN LAST FEW DAYS, POWERFUL CONSTELLATION OF MINISTERS AND KNESSET MEMBERS WITHIN LABOR ALIGNMENT HAVE COME OUT OPENLY FOR DAYAN TO RESIGN, AND SOME HAVE THREATENED TO DO SO THEMSELVES IF HE DOES NOT. ANTI-DAYAN FORCES ARE LED BY MINISTERS ALLON, RABIN, YARIV, BAR-LEV, GALILI, SHEMTOV AND ROSEN WHILE SAPIR AND EBAN HAVE SO FAR KEPT RELATIVELY LOW PROFILE. DAYAN'S OPPONENTS HAVE CALLED PUBLIC ATTENTION TO DAYAN'S OWN STATEMENT AT DEC. 5, 1973, CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING: "I CARRY PARLIAMENTARY RESPONSIBILITY, WHETHER IT IS INTELLIGENCE, COMMAND 'A', OR COMMAND 'B' -- I STILL CARRY PARLIAMENTARY RESPONSIBILITY. LET US ASSUME THAT I AM NOT GUILTY OF ANYTHING AND THAT SOMEBODY IN THE ARMY IS GUILTY -- EVEN THEN I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR IT AND CARRY PARLIAMENTARY RESPONSIBILITY."

4. DAYAN APRIL 4 TOLD HIS RAFI FACTION THAT HE HAS NO INTENTION OF
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RESIGNING SINCE INTERIM REPORT HAS NEITHER CHARGED HIM WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT WENT WRONG OR CALLED ON HIM TO STEP DOWN. POSITION OF RAFI FACTION IS THAT, IF RESPONSIBILITY IS TO BE APPLIED AT POLITICAL LEVEL, THEN ENTIRE CABINET IS TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE AND MUST RESIGN. AS SHIMON PERES HAS PUT IT, EITHER EVERYONE STANDS TOGETHER OR EVERYONE FALLS TOGETHER. IT IS CLEAR THAT IF RAFI PULLS OUT, THEN GOVERNMENT CAN NO LONGER COMMAND PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY.

4. NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY MINISTERS HAVE SAID THAT NO RESIGNATIONS ARE CALLED FOR, WITH RAPHAEL ADDING THE WARNING THAT IF MRS MEIR "THROWS DAYAN TO THE DOGS" SHE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO COUNT ON NRP'S SUPPORT. THE FOUR NRP KNESSET MEMBERS WHO OPPOSE THEIR PARTY'S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT ON OTHER HAND HAVE CALLED ON ENTIRE GOVERNMENT TO RESIGN.

5. AT THIS JUNCTURE, MRS MEIR HOLDS KEY TO GOVERNMENT'S SURVIVAL IN HER HANDS. SHE IS PESSIMISTIC, RECOGNIZING THAT SHE CONFRONTS NO-WIN SITUATION: IF DAYAN STAYS, OTHER MINISTERS RESIGN; IF DAYAN GOES, SO DOES RAFI AND THE GOVERNMENT'S KNESSET MAJORITY. MRS MEIR CAN BE EXPECTED TO MUSTER ALL HER POWERS OF PERSUASION TO TRY TO CONVINCE ANTI-DAYAN FORCES THAT, GIVEN BOTH MILITARY AND POLITICAL SITUATION CONFRONTING ISRAEL, THIS IS WORST POSSIBLE TIME FOR NEW GOVT CRISIS.

6. AS TO LIKELY SCENARIO OF NEXT FEW DAYS, THERE DOUBTLESS WILL BE EXTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS OVER HOLIDAY WEEKEND TO SEE IF SOME SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND SHORT OF CABINET RESIGNATION AND/OR OPEN SPLIT OF LABOR PARTY. LABOR PARTY MINISTERS, KNESSET FACTION AND EXECUTIVE WILL MEET APRIL 8, THE CABINET WILL CONVENE ON APRIL 9 AND THE KNESSET DEBATE ON AGRANAT REPORT IS NOW SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 11.

7. WE SEE AT LEAST THREE POSSIBILITIES AHEAD: (A) SOME COMPROMISE WILL BE FOUND LEAVING GOVERNMENT IN PLACE AND UNCHANGED; (B) DAYAN ALONE WILL RESIGN; OR (C) MRS MEIR AND DAYAN WILL BOTH RESIGN. ALTERNATIVE (B) WOULD DESTROY GOVERNMENT'S ALREADY NAR
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